



ALBERTA

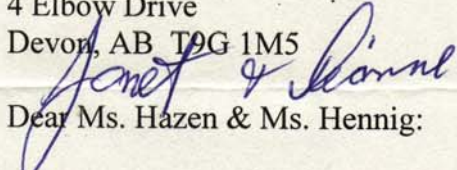
EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION

Office of the Minister

MLA, Dunvegan-Central Peace

August 24, 2009

Ms. Janet Hazen
Ms. Dianne Hennig
Edmonton Dental Assistants Association
4 Elbow Drive
Devon, AB T9G 1M5


Dear Ms. Hazen & Ms. Hennig:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of dental staff and dental auxiliary organizations in Alberta. As the Minister responsible for the legislation governing the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), I am pleased to respond.

In your correspondence, the Edmonton Dental Assistants Association (EDAA) requests that dental offices be removed from WCB exempt status (voluntary), and that all dental staff in Alberta receives the mandatory coverage for workplace injuries and illness. The EDAA asserts that the dental industry has evolved over time, and dental staff work in environments that expose them to risks such as toxins and infections, as well as musculoskeletal injuries. The Association also contends that dental assistants in exempt industries perform the same work and are exposed to similar risk as those employed in industries that require compulsory coverage, such as dental laboratories/clinics and those working for public health authorities.

The workers' compensation system in Alberta has a long history of operating with a compulsory and exempt list for industries. Industries exempt from mandatory inclusion under WCB are contained in Schedule A of the Workers' Compensation Regulations. Schedule A exempts "medical and dental services, provision of, except when those services are provided by a regional health authority or a subsidiary health corporation under the *Regional Health Authorities Act*. Employers that operate in exempt industries such as dental offices may voluntarily apply for workers' compensation to protect their workers. The WCB has approached dental offices in the past to offer compensation coverage, however the majority of stakeholders preferred to maintain their own private insurance.

At this time, the Alberta Government is not considering removal of dental offices from WCB exempt status to compulsory status. Members of the EDAA continue to have the option to approach their individual employers about purchasing voluntary workers' compensation coverage for protection against workplace accidents or illness. Currently,

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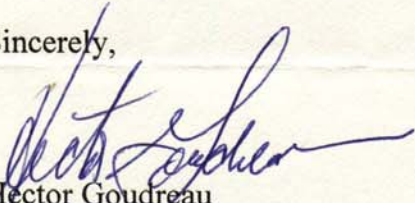
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private dental clinics that apply for voluntary WCB coverage are classified under code 82500 *Medical Centre – Private*. This industry includes dental offices, doctor's offices, medicentres and other private patient care facilities.

Additional information relating to voluntary WCB coverage can be located on-line at <http://www.wcb.ab.ca/employers/>. Alternatively, you may contact a WCB Employer and Account Services Representative by calling 780-498-3999.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



Hector Goudreau
Minister of Employment and Immigration
MLA, Dunvegan – Central Peace